

Writing is Like a 3-Day Loop Hike

Imagine you are planning a 3-day loop hike over a mountain pass to a lake.

(characters)

Where are you going? (setting)

How long will you be gone?

What time of year is it?

What will you need to take with you? (details)

backpacks, sleeping bag, food, clothing, boots, map, flashlight, etc

What obstacles happen along the way? (sequenced story problems)

As you climb, the obstacles become more and more difficult:

fallen trees

streams with no bridges or broken bridges

dangerous icy/snow-covered pass (trail invisible)

How will your P.O.V character move through each problem? (solutions)

Climb over the fallen log to 1st night's camp site

Walk through the stream, holding your pack high to keep it dry to keep moving up the mountain

Devise a clever plan to get beyond the snow before nightfall to find a safe place to spend night #2

Move on to your destination (climax) the mountain lake you came to see and photograph

How will the adventure end? (ending)

How will you take the characters back to their normal life?

You want your reader to:

Follow you as the story develops.

Feel your obstacles make sense (maybe try to guess what comes next).

Feel satisfied with the way you solved the problems.

Stay interested until the journey/the story ends.

Fiction Writing Clues

Describe:

Who: the characters

names, ages (maybe); how they look/act/move/think

What: character's problems or actions

what action must they take?

Who solves their problem? (should be protagonist)

Where: location

Are they at home/at work/on a trip/special event?

Are they in a fictional land? a dream?

When: the time

Does time of day/week/month/year matter? Share why.

Did it happen long ago, yesterday or in the future?

Why: what do you, the Author, want the reader to know?

Release information as needed

Hold back important details as long as possible

Use:

Your 5 senses

Share what you see, hear, smell, taste and touch.

Use weather if it changes the struggle along the way.

Vibrant Verbs

Find more descriptive words than 'went', 'run', 'got'...

Details, details, details

Draw us a word picture to put us in the scene.

Interesting nouns

Instead of 'store', tell us the type of store, etc.

Illustration

Use words to share important details on each page.

Check:

Word Choice - Is there a better, more descriptive word to use?

Beginning, Middle and End - Does your story have all 3 parts?

SNT (Show not Tell) - Are your characters 'doing things'?

Add a surprise (when possible)

Then:

Read aloud to yourself to check the flow and scout out word changes.

Ask another person to read your work, ask questions, share ideas.

Revise: check spelling, conventions, story flow, etc.

Step away as long as possible before you write your final copy (to turn in).

Very Short Story Outline

(A) _____ wants _____.
because _____,
but _____ gets in the way.

(B) _____ will intercede by _____
_____ to get _____
when) _____
because _____
and then _____ happens.

(A) solves the problem by _____
_____.

KEY:

(A) represents the main character

(B) represents the obstacle (a person, thing, or event) that gets in the way

If I were...

Select one topic. Write 3 sentences to share your ideas.

a plant

an animal

on a TV show

a candy bar

a doodle

orange or yellow

a word

a book character

a piece of furniture

a cartoon character

a tree

purple or green

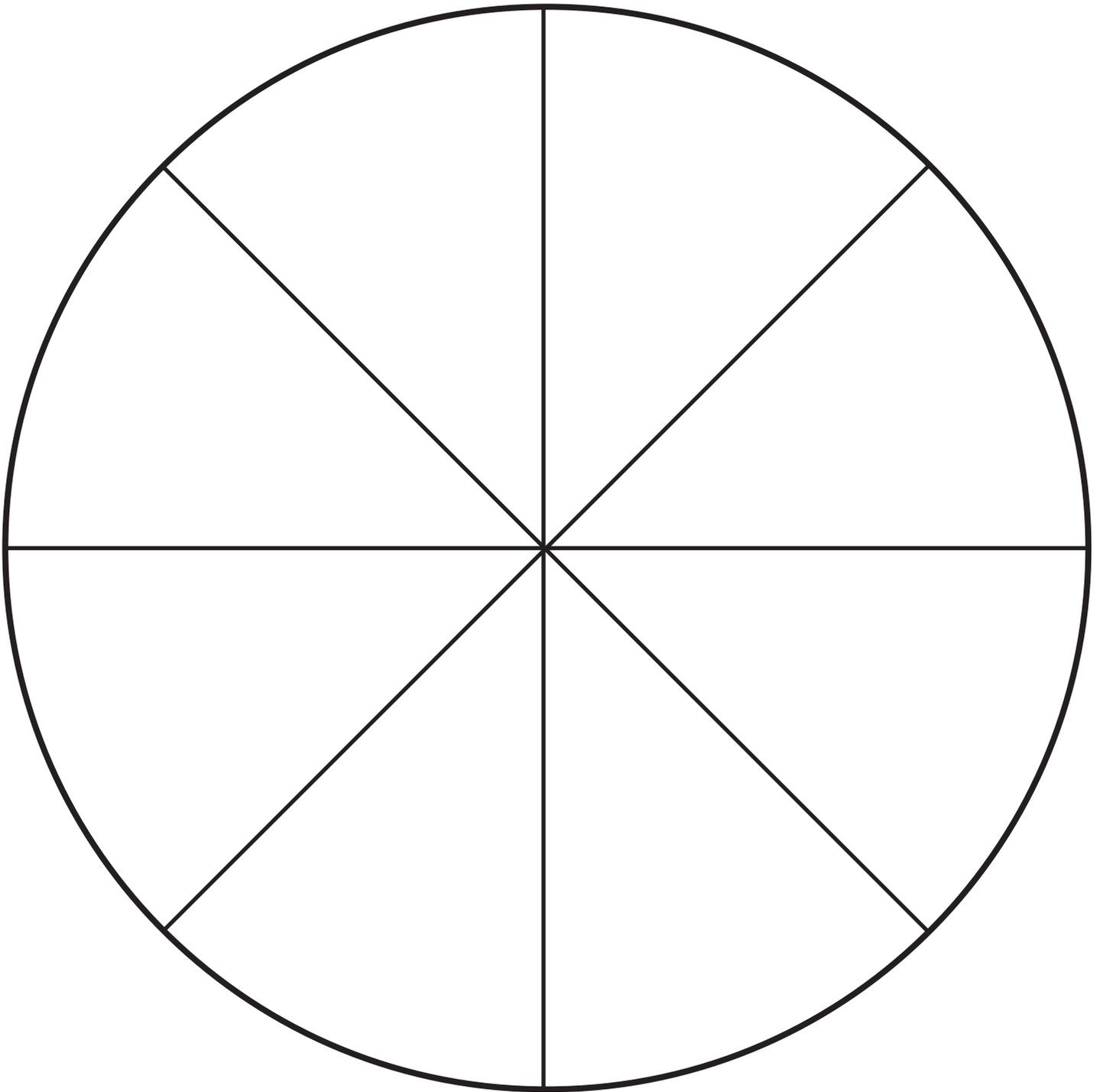
a car

a ball

... I'd

Write Around the Circle by _____

It's fun to write about what you know, but try being creative too. Write in different genres or kinds of stories. Every time you complete a story in one of these categories, color in the space. You may also use this circle to rewrite a story by telling it in a different voice or a different genre.



FRESH Writing Ideas for the End of the Year

15 Favorite Words (word search)

1. Ask each student to share up to 15 words related of a topic of their choice.
2. Each word must be 15 letters or less
3. Create individual word searches using tools.atozteacherstuff.com/word-search-maker. (Takes about 3-5 minutes to type in the words and make a print.)
4. Reproduce the word searches for classmates to use.

How to

1. Students use a step-by-step approach to write out how to do a simple task: make sharpen a pencil, put on a jacket and zip to closed, walk to the library from their classroom, walk to the play shed, make a PB&J sandwich, etc.
2. As the teacher, follow their directions aloud, exactly as written. Do not add any other movements, etc. to demonstrate. (It's funny and also harder to do than it appears.)
EXAMPLE: When I used to do it with kids, I'd demo how to put on a jacket per their verbal directions. If they said, put my arms in the jacket, I did it upside down and backward unless they wrote specific directions that prevented that motion.
3. Turn them loose writing their own how-to.
4. Demonstrate their directions and enjoy the craziness!
5. Older students might enjoy illustrating their how-to.

Captions

1. Pass out single frame cartoons or photos of news events, sports, etc. with the captions removed.
2. Ask the students to write new captions or a short story.
3. Share their captions/stories.

Sensory Poem or Story

1. Read a poem or story that used sensory images:
 - a. The Colors of the Day by XXXX (color words)
 - b. Imagine a Night by XXX (visual impact)
2. Discuss the senses: touch, hear, sound, taste, smell. Maybe you can find a book on senses
3. Pick 1 or 2 senses to write about.
4. Create a word list for each sense you plan to use before you start writing.
5. Select a simple topic: foods, weather, their bedroom, a favorite place to visit, playing with friends, favorite holiday, their pets, etc.
6. Share the stories aloud.

Create a New Animal

1. Use your imagination to write about a new character just discovered in the forest, jungle, city, ocean, polar, or desert location.
2. Draw the animal but do not show the drawing to anyone.
3. Exchange papers so a student must read the description then draw the animal.
Compare it to the animal the author drew.
4. Discuss the reason for the differences.

Mystery Character

1. Write a paragraph to describe a favorite fictional character **without using their name or any specific detail about where they live.**

Here are sample starter sentences:

- a. **Harry Potter** would be described as a **boy** with magic powers **who lived away from home.**
 - b. **Sleeping Beauty** would become a beautiful **girl** who lived in a **huge house.**
 - c. **Fancy Nancy** becomes a **girl** who likes colorful words.
 - d. **Sponge Bob** becomes a **squishy object** that lives **underwater.**
2. The last line written shares a clue that helps the audience discover the identity of the mystery character.

Book Review (like Reading Rainbow)

What is one of your favorite books?

1. Write a paragraph that share the story line but doesn't give away any surprises in the book.
2. Tell us why you like it (Be specific about the characters, the setting or the subject.
3. Instead of saying "I really liked it." or "It was funny," tell us what made the book special.

Mad Libs

1. Encourage students to select a topic that interests them.
2. Have them write up to 10 sentences about their topic.
3. Ask them circle 10-15 key words in their writing that represent nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.
4. Edit their writing, leaving a line for each selected/circled words.
5. Reproduce the writing for the class to enjoy.

Story Genres

Expository Non-Fiction

Explains information and ideas
Uses illustration with captions, labels, diagrams
Creates sections with headings
Ex: Comets, Anasazi Indians

Fables

1-2 main characters
Outsmarts others
Lesson learned
Ex: The Tortoise and The Hare

Fantasy

Invented world and characters
Anything can happen
Ex: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Informational Narrative/Fiction

Presents facts and information

Realistic Fiction

Characters and events are like real people and events
Main character has a problem
Contains dialogue, details, descriptive language
Ex: The Oxcart Man

Poetry

Uses images, figurative language, sensory details
Expresses emotion and ideas with minimal words (uses simile, etc.)
Creates rhythm
Ex: Where the Sidewalk Ends, Something Big Has Been Here

Historical Fiction

Historical events (past events from 1 time period)
Portrays as if characters are real
Setting as important at main events
Ex: The Cabin Faced West

Fairy Tale

“Once upon a time”
Main character uses magic to solve problems
Events occur in 3’s
Ex: Cinderella

Folk Tale

Story passed down over time

“Once, long ago..”

Animals behave/talk as humans

Presents a lesson

Ex: Pelé, Raven, Coyote stories

Tall Tale

Main character is clever, “bigger than life”; defeats a powerful foe

Uses humor and imagination

Main character creates lakes, canyons, etc.

Ex; Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill

Native American Tales/Legends

Story passed down over time

Clever animals show how the world changed (“and that is how..”)

Ex. How Raven Stole the Moon

Science Fiction

Set in space, inside the earth, etc.

Uses science, invention and fantasy

Characters achieve success through new or invented technology

Ex: Spy Kid, Star Wars

Mystery

Hidden problem, “red herrings”, false leads

Main character must uncover the truth

Ex: Nate the Great, Cam Jensen

Add-on-Story

1 character has a problem

1 by 1 characters arrive to help solve the problem

Together they solve the problem or create a surprise ending

Ex: Stone Soup, If You Give a Mouse a Cookie

Let's Write!

My Family

My Pets

Favorite Places

Favorite Sports

Yummy or Yucky Food

Family Trips

Favorite Things

Favorite Stories/Books

Crazy Dreams

An A-B-C Book about

If I Could be invisible

Best Holidays/Events

Imaginary Characters

Imaginary Places

Super Powers

If I were:

an eagle

a space traveler

My Rules for:
being a friend

A Book about

How to:
make a kite

The Magic
pencil
computer

A Fairy Tale about:

A Newspaper about:

A Mystery

A Space Adventure

A Science Booklet



Word Wizardry

Change *one letter at a time* to transform the following words.

r a i n (change the 'n' to 'l' and make **r-a-i-l**)

_____ (change the 'r' in ra-i-l to 'h' and make **h-a-i-l**)

h a i l

Try these:

c a f e

c o o k

h e a d

f o o t

f o u l

s h o t

b r e a d

f l o u r

s l o w

d r i p

Now turn the paper over and test your patience! Transform the following words: (It make take many steps and even fill the page!)

one > two

four > five

seven > eight

messy > clean

soda > milk

moon > star

How to Write an Interesting Non Fiction Story

___ Brainstorm ideas for a story.

___ Select 1 topic Who OR What?

___ Share the setting: place, time, century, season. Where? When?

___ Select interesting details and problems. What? Why?

___ Detail #1

___ Problems

___ Detail #2

___ The ACTIONS you want readers to take

___ Detail #3

___ Write a Rough Draft (skip lines!!)

___ Story Checklist (**Check 3 times: by self, with a student editor, with an adult editor**)

___ ___ ___ beginning, middle, and ending

___ ___ ___ **interesting** details and adjectives: **noteworthy facts**

___ ___ ___ **active, interesting** verbs

___ ___ ___ sentences make sense and LIMIT:

 use of *an, and then, then, next,*

 repeating the same idea and words over and over

___ ___ ___ use of **senses**: hear, see, smell, touch, taste as appropriate

___ ___ ___ use & indent **proper** paragraphs

___ ___ ___ **proper** punctuation (periods, commas, quotation marks, etc.)

___ ___ ___ **proper** capitalization

___ ___ ___ subheadings, graphs, illustrations, charts

ReREAD one more time. Make changes. Send to be printed.

How to Write an Interesting Fiction Story

___ Brainstorm ideas for a story.

___ Select 1 or more characters to star in your story. Who?

___ Select an interesting setting: place, time, season. Where? When?

___ Select interesting problems to solve (3 or more are best) What? Why?

___ Problem #1

___ Problem #3 **BIGGEST Problem**

___ Problem #2

___ Other Problems

___ Write a Rough Draft (skip lines!!)

___ Story Checklist (**Check 3 times: by self, with a student editor, with an adult editor**)

___ ___ ___ beginning, middle, and ending

___ ___ ___ characters are interesting

___ ___ ___ **active, interesting** verbs

___ ___ ___ sentences make sense and LIMIT:

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 - Release information as needed
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- Your 5 senses
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- Revise: check spelling, conventions, story flow, etc.
- Step away as long as possible before you write your final copy (to turn in).

Instead of...

Walk

step

pace

lurch

waddle

skip

tiptoe

slither

Smile

grin

smirk

Look

see

watch

notice

spot

glance

Laugh

giggle

chuckle

joke

What's the Author's Job?

Write their best article, story, etc. writing.

Check for errors.

Read it aloud to self.

Ask a student to listen and help edit the writing.

What Does an Editor Do?

Actively listen as the author reads their work aloud.

Share the parts of the writing that “work”.

Ask questions about unclear parts of the writing.

Suggest changes to enhance the writing

Help with spelling and writing conventions.

What's the Author's Next Step?

Read over the suggestion from the student editor/teacher.

Let the writing “sit” before you make any changes.

Make changes and re-read before final/finished work.

Ways Characters Act

active
adventurous
afraid
angry
annoyed
babyish
bored
bossy
busy
calm
charming
cheerful
clever
clumsy
competitive
concerned
confident
confused
considerate
cowardly
cruel
daring
determined
dishonest
eager
easy-going
embarrassed
energetic
excited
fidgety
foolish
friendly
frustrated
funny
gentle
grouchy
happy

helpful
hopeful
imaginative
impatient
impolite
impatient
independent
jealous
lazy
lonely
loyal
lucky
mean
moody
mysterious
nervous
noisy
obedient
obnoxious
peaceful
persistent
picky
pleasant
proud
puzzled
quiet
relieved
respectful
restless
rude
scared
secretive
selfish
silly
sincere
smart
sneaky

stingy
strange
strict
stubborn
sweet
talented
talkative
terrified
thankful
thoughtful
thoughtless
timid
touchy
trusting
uncontrolled
unfriendly
unhappy
unselfish
upset
useful
warm-hearted
weak
worried

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

Writing Tools

H E I G H T P Q S O X I D E T A I L S F
E X R G R R N Z C H P R U F E J N I L R
Y E B H O C B I O F L E L A L I G C P I
G T Q B S X T O L G I T X M J D X G S E
T A L E N T S V O O O C A I F S C N P N
V E R B S G O D R V I A D L E N I I O D
M N O I T U L O S E H R D Y A O T T V S
G E C A L P H T R I B A R T R I S T R I
J H Q W E M I T Q E J H E H S T I E Z Q
K W E G K S Y E F M X C S H D C L S Q Q
S E L A V J S F A A V K S E C A A X W Q
E I O H I I A M V N R M S Y O L E C S S
M G C R S Q T P O K E U R E V C R R E O
A H A O P A N T R C H S M E I J C Z N R
N T T T O S A E I I T U Q E T B B H S O
S L I I R J F W T N A G U X Y I B L E E
R I O D T G L C E C E F R G P E R O S N
D H N E S L M T S C W B D V I Z M W H E
S S Y P X B R O L O C R I A H K U U W M
F I C T I O N B M Z C V Y G E N R E C Y

ACTIONS NAMES
ADDRESS NICKNAME
BIRTHPLACE PROBLEM
CHARACTER REALISTIC
COLOR SENSES
DETAILS SETTING
EDITOR SOLUTION
ENEMY SPORTS
EYE TALENTS
FAMILY TIME
FANTASY VERBS
FAVORITES WEATHER
FEARS WEIGHT
FICTION WRITER
FRIENDS
GENRE
HAIRCOLOR
HEIGHT
HOBBIES
LOCATION